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By 20 NARA Date 7/9/07

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PEKING 21

July 19, 1973

TO: HENRY KISSINGER

FROM: JENKINS/HOLDRIDGE

REF: WASHINGTON 019

1. We believe it significant that Cambodia is only subject of Chinese message, and that we detect no change whatever in our relationship and any other context. Lack of grace and wording we believe in part caused by Magnuson lack of grace in interview with Chou. It is very possible that first and third of reasons you conjecture are at play (para two your tel). If party congress is taking shape, it may indeed be inconvenient for you to come at time planned. Believe fundamental policy change not involved. Chinese calculate we are in weak position in Cambodia. They were unquestionably angered by our last spurt of intensified bombing, not to mention Chou's anger produced by Magnuson's counseling "patience" while that was going on. Even the attitude of others of the Congressional Party was read by the Chinese as arrogance and was well designed to trigger sensitive Chinese pride. As one of many instances, Mrs. Magnuson remarked to Wang Hai-jung, whom you well know is close to Mao, that the best ambassadors which Americans could possibly send to China would be washing machines and electric irons.

2. Chinese in their public statements have carefully avoided doing anything like all the way with Sihanouk's position, such as e.g. Chou En-lai's banquet speech of July 6 was much milder than Sihanouk's. Anniversary of Mao's May 20, 1970 declaration on Cambodia passed this year without a murmur, another example of Chinese care in public. Yet they believe that he is the only answer at this stage, and we believe that they also consider that it is the most graceful way out for us, too. Sihanouk, despite his (AEEVEJUSTNOM), has indicated that the slate can be wiped clean so far as the United States is concerned. The Chinese are convinced that we cannot win militarily, and could not even if the Congress had not acted as it has -- although we might have further postponed the day of reckoning similar to the one which they believe we now face.

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3. We do not read this as a brutal message, but rather a restatement of a firm Chinese position. On the other hand the Chinese doubtless find this no time for grace, given the above considerations and probably puzzlement as to why we do not now see the situation much as they do. We do not believe the Chinese want to embarrass the United States, and certainly not you personally, in any way they can avoid. They probably reason there is no alternative to the course they want us to take. And they appear to have considerable faith in Cambodian nationalisms ability to prevent a vacuum which would tempt the Soviets or even leave the path open to a very disturbing degree to the Vietnamese. They doubt we can prop up Lon Nol, and believe we should accept what appears to them to be the best way out for us as well as them. All of our basic areas of common ground appear intact to us.

4. We therefore suggest you consider postponing (not cancelling) your trip with a correct note just short of cool, with observation date now contemplated may not be convenient for either side, and suggesting that a date perhaps in September but to be later determined seems advisable. You may still wish Ambassador Bruce to have frank call on Ch'iao, or in this case Chou, to test whether our fundamental relationship is not indeed still fully intact, and explore in detail what the Chinese have in mind.

5. If you have any thought of trying to make contact with Sihanouk or elements close to him, you might wish to indicate so to the Chinese, who certainly will be expecting some response to their message. You could do this in the note to them on your visit or through Ambassador Bruce, pointing out in either case the inappropriateness of using the Mauritanian channel referred to by Sihanouk is his AFP interview of July 17, and noting that a better channel is needed.

6. Warm Regards.

END OF MESSAGE

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